

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04

USIA-06 SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 PA-01

PRS-01 /100 R

DRAFTED BY AF/W-GADIES:DFF

APPROVED BY AF/W-TWMSMITH

AF-JJ0LAKE

EUR/NE-NACHILLES (SUBS)

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R 201821Z NOV 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

INFO AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 274908

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: BPRO, ENRG, CD, US

SUBJECT: CONOCO OIL EXPLORATION IN CHAD

1. DURING CHADIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KAMOUGUE'S CALL ON DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL OCTOBER 6, KAMOUGUE SAID HE BELIEVED CONOCO HAD FOUND COMMERCIAL QUANTITIES OF OIL IN CHAD, ALTHOUGH COMPANY HAD NOT BEGUN PRODUCTION. KAMOUGUE REQUESTED USG ASSISTANCE IN PERSUADING CONOCO TO BEGIN PRODUCTION. INGERSOLL REPLIED THAT HE DOUBTED ANY COMPANY WOULD CAP A COMMERCIALY FEASIBLE WELL UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, NOTED THAT USG COULD NOT FORCE PRIVATE US FIRM TO TAKE ACTION, BUT SAID THAT WE WOULD MAKE INFORMAL INQUIRIES REGARDING VALIDITY OF CHADIAN CLAIM.

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2. IN SUBSEQUENT CONTACTS WITH CONOCO HDQTRS. IN US, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD HIGH SULPHUR, LOW QUALITY CRUDE HAS BEEN FOUND IN CHAD, BUT THAT IT IS NOT A COMMERCAL PROPOSITION. WE HAVE ALSO RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT MORE PRECISE DATA ON CHAD WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO US, BUT NONE HAS TO DATE. CONOCO HERE TELLS US THEIR RELUCTANCE TO RELEASE ANYTHING TO US STEMS FROM FACTS A) CHAD OPERATION IS SUPERVISED BY THEIR LONDON OFFICE, AND B) NEW INFO ON CHAD'S OIL POTENTIAL HAS RECENTLY COME TO LIGHT, AND IS STILL

BEING EVALUATED. WE BELIEVE CONOCO HAS MADE CONSIDERABLE DATA AVAILABLE TO CHADIANS IN NDJAMENA, BUT THAT THE CHADIANS ARE NOT SURE HOW TO INTERPRET THIS INFORMATION. WE DO NOT WISH TO REVEAL ANY INFORMATION CONOCO WISHES TO KEEP FROM THE CHADIANS, OR THAT IS STILL BEING EVALUATED. BUT WE MUST REPLY TO THE CHADIANS ASAP, AND WISH TO DO SO IN FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE CURRENT SITUATION.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: THE EMBASSY SHOULD CONTACT A MR. SAHAKIAN IN CONOCO'S LONDON OFFICE AND ASK FOR A FULL BRIEFING ON THE CONOCO OPERATION IN CHAD. YOU MAY POINT OUT THAT CHADIANS WISH TO BE SURE WHETHER OR NOT CONOCO'S OPERATIONS TO DATE HAVE RESULTED IN COMMERCIAL FIND. WE DO NOT PLAN TO EXPLAIN SITUATION IN DETAIL TO CHADIANS, PARTICULARLY SINCE THIS HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE BY CONOCO REPS IN NDJAMENA, BUT WE MUST BE ABLE TO CITE SUFFICIENT FACTS TO SUBSTANTIATE THE CONCLUSION. FINALLY, WE MUST PURSUE QUESTION VIGOROUSLY SINCE IT WAS DIRECTED TO DEPUTY SECRETARY BY CHADIAN FOREIGN MINISTER. IF NECESSARY, CONOCO MAY INDICATE WHICH DETAILS IT DOES NOT WISH TO HAVE PASSED ON TO GOC.

4. APPRECIATE EMBASSY ASSISTANCE. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PETROLEUM INDUSTRY, EXPLORATORY DRILLING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE274908
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: GADIES:DFF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750405-0945
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751127/aaaaayct.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <06 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ONOCO OIL EXPLORATION IN CHAD
TAGS: BPRO, ENRG, CD, US, CONOCO
To: LONDON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006